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My name is John Smith. I grew up with five brothers and five sisters and I was second from the youngest. I started working odd jobs with my father and with friends when I became a teenager. I worked as a farmhand, a construction worker, a landscaper, and even an inspector for indoor sprinkler systems. Through these jobs I learned the meaning of work ethic and the need for manual labor in today's society. This experience has allowed me to understand other's experiences from a more worldly perspective and has also allowed me to relate more effectively with others. Throughout my teenage years I would go with my father to purchase and sell items such as livestock, appliances, vehicles, and old farm equipment. I would observe the way he handled himself and overtime I learned the art of negotiation and the value of a dollar from a more adult point of view.

I moved to Arizona in 2003. It did not take long for me to find my way. Within 5 months I was the top salesperson at my new job, and I made a lot of new friends. I learned how to manage my money more effectively and also learned about corporate America. I was able to use my 10-step sales process that I developed over time. This method proved to be a success and after only five months on the floor I was promoted to a manager position. My sales process was approved by training and over my nine-year tenure with the company I have trained new employees, managers, and even entire locations. I have worked on multiple specialty projects; I love what I do and who I work for. My manager role has taught me a lot. I have learned how to coach to budgets, goals, and personal goals. I have learned that my role is to motivate and encourage my team to excel even if they do not want to do so on their own. Not everyone is motivated to help their company grow so I am there to hold them accountable to themselves and their employer.

I put my education on hold for many years while I pursued a career and focused on my personal life. I decided in 2010 that I would restart my path toward my bachelor's degree and began classes at University of Phoenix full time. It was a struggle to balance life and school at first, but I gained momentum near the end of 2010. My goal is to be finished with my degree by December of 2013. This is why I am writing these essays. I have a lot of life experiences and believe that they have made me a better person and a stronger leader at work.

On a personal level, my wife and I met in 2004 and started dating in 2006. We had our first child in April of 2010, and our son was born in 2012. I enjoy my family more than anything else in my life. Parenting is challenging but very rewarding. It can sometimes be difficult to be a nurturing available parent when there are so many other things on my plate, but I know how important my time and structure is for them. I believe that I have successfully found a balance between career and family and I enjoy both aspects of my life.





As a parent it is hard to teach your children to do their best and to be a good role model especially with the peer pressure all around them. Developing parental skills come with being a parent as long as you learn from your mistakes then you will be fine. In my experience parenting takes a whole lot of learning and guidance.

When I met my wife, she already had two daughters from a previous marriage and as I mentioned previously the third daughter is mine and my wife is pregnant with our fourth daughter. I personally call them my daughters because they call me dad and I have known them since the time they were 1 ½ and 3 years old and they rarely even see their biological father. The current ages of my children are 7, 5, & 3 years old and my wife will be having another baby in just about three months as well.

**Testing and Application** (approx. 150 words):

I have found through my experience in parenting that parenting will never end until you run out of time on this earth. Truly understanding my children and what they really need is going to be the biggest test and application because they can easily tell me all of the things that they want in life, but as a parent I need to figure out what they honestly need; spiritually, emotionally, & physically. Even though my children have not hit their teenage years and have not yet had hormonal experiences they are still plenty irritable from time to time and it is up to me to help comfort them during these times of need. When I can gain the trust of my children life is much easier because my children listen to me and they know what I am telling them to do is going to be in their best interest. The real test is to understand how to read my children's behavior to see if they are listening to me or if they are pulling away from the situation.



discipline is also a part of this process. Even though my child